

**Draft Secretariat to
National Municipal Heating Strategy Task Force**

Prepared for U.S. Agency for International Development

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Introduction

On May 7, 2008 the Cabinet of Ministers issued decree number 465 that established an Interagency Task Force (Task Force) to develop a National Municipal Heating Strategy for reforming the provision of heat to the communal service sector. The reforms will encompass a range of issues that include establishing an independent regulator, structuring tariffs to reflect full costs, creating incentives for energy efficiency, providing social support to replace or offset the current heat subsidies, and licensing all district heating enterprises. The Task Force has the status of an advisory board to the Cabinet of Ministers and is comprised of governmental officials, representatives of international donor organizations, academic institutions and civic organizations.

This document discusses the Task Force Secretariat that will enable the Task Force to more effectively carry out its mission by providing support services to include meeting coordination, documenting decisions, maintaining records, and communicating to Task Force members and other stakeholder organizations.

The first section discusses the role, functions, and initial activities of the Secretariat, the second section discusses its composition and resource requirements, and the third section discusses initial activities, and the fourth section discusses its resource needs.

Secretariat Role and Functions

The role of the Secretariat is to support the Task Force and Work Groups through the provision of orderly, timely, responsive, and coordinated processes that form the basis for its formulation and implementation of policy and program decisions. Secretariat activities are characterized by three major functions: 1) administrative logistics, which are largely internal to the Task Force and Work Groups, 2) communication and interaction among the Task Force and Work Group members, and non-governmental stakeholders, and 3) research, analysis, and document preparation for the Task Force and Work Groups.

Administrative logistics supports the internal operation of the Task Force and Work Groups and consists of the following activities:

- Receive, assign, and track Task Force and Work Group internal correspondence.
- Schedule meetings of the full Task Force and Work Groups to include arranging logistics, sending invitations and agendas.
- Facilitate meetings and inter-sessional work of Task Force and Work Groups.
- Take meeting minutes and publish within 5 work days.
- Transmit reports to the Task Force from the Work Groups.
- Transmit guidance to the Work Groups for activities assigned by the Task Force.
- Maintain a record for all official documents and departmental actions and decisions.

- Identify issues that require the attention of the Task Force and Work Groups.

Communication and interaction activities consist of the following:

- Establish and maintain a network of stakeholders consisting of Task Force members, and other governmental and non-governmental organizations.
- Disseminate information on decisions and actions of the Task Force and Work Groups to stakeholders (perhaps in the form of a quarterly newsletter and bulletins).
- Solicit stakeholder comment on Task Force activities, decisions, and comments, and communicate to the Task Force and Work Groups.
- Maintain a library of relevant documents, decrees, and other information for use by the Task Force, Work Groups, and stakeholders.

Research, analysis, and document preparation activities may include:

- Research and/or analysis of particular topics/issues.
- Preparation of legal and/or legislative documents based on Work Group outputs.

Required Actions

The required first action is for the Task Force to establish the Secretariat and obtain commitments of support from the host organization, financing, and staffing from (Task Force) member organizations. In addition, the organizational and reporting relationships must be defined to ensure neutrality of the Secretariat, responsiveness to requests, and timely operation to include meeting notification and scheduling, preparation and review of deliverables, etc. Timely operation is important to ensure full input-to and consideration-of issues and should be established as an operating procedure, with exceptions granted infrequently.

Based on the above list of functions and upon establishment, the program of work for the Secretariat over the next three months should include:

- Establishing reporting and record keeping procedures and mechanisms.
- Scheduling the time and place for Task Force* and Work Group** meetings for six months in advance.
- Establishing a network of stakeholders at the national, regional, local levels, and non-governmental organizations.
- Developing a communication plan to interact with and provide information to stakeholder organizations.***

* Scheduled Task Force meetings will be held the second Thursday of April and October, with additional meetings scheduled, as necessary, through the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall be notified of the date and agenda for an un-scheduled meeting no less than 15 working days notice in advance of the meeting date in order to provide meeting attendees notification no less than 10 working days advance notice.

** Scheduled Work Group meetings will be held the first Thursday of every month, with additional meetings scheduled, as necessary, through the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall be notified of the date and agenda for an un-scheduled meeting no less than 10 working days notice in advance of the meeting date in order to provide meeting attendees notification no less than 5 working days advance notice.

*** See the draft communication plan 'Recommendations on Methods to be Used by Task Force for Obtaining Input from Non-Gov Stakeholders' as partial fulfillment of this start-up activity.

Resource and Funding Requirements

It is important that the Secretariat be viewed as a neutral organization that supports the Task Force with impartiality to the host or any other member organization. In many cases, neutrality is ensured by the provision of financial resources by member organizations (i.e. Task Force members). This may not be possible in the establishment of a Secretariat for the Task Force. due to the time needed to identify and budget financial resources, but Task Force members may want to contribute staff and/or provide a host location ^{*} for the Secretariat.

Staffing should, at minimum, consist of one executive administrator, one administrative specialist, and one communication specialist. Additional staffing may be required if the Secretariat is to maintain expertise in a particular subject area, provide research and/or analytical support, and/or contracting support for particular issues/needs. The executive administrator must have the trust of the other partners and must have good communication and diplomatic skills.

The host organization needs to provide office space with furniture and office equipment necessary to carry out its functions, and provision needs to be made for meeting space suitable for Task Force and Work Group meetings. In addition, limited financial resources may be required to purchase and/or mail information.

It is important that the host organization acknowledge that it provide accommodation (in the widest sense of the word) for the partnership secretariat. This implies that the secretariat staff has a separate line of authority from the rest of the organization, but follows the administrative rules and regulations of the host organization. The host can identify the secretariat as a separate project within its organization, with the relationship supported by a Memorandum of Understanding between the host organization and the Task Force

To reiterate the opening statement of this section, partnership is key to success -- the host must understand that the Secretariat is a shared organization, whose function is to support the Task Force and Work Groups.

Lifetime

The lifetime of the Secretariat shall be determined by the leadership of the Task Force or when the Task Force has completed its assigned mission (scheduled for December 31, 2010).

^{*} A recommendation is to assign host responsibility to the Ministry of Housing and Communal Services due to its leading responsibility in Task Force activities.